

REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to the specification on several minor formal matters. In response to the Examiner's comments, Applicants have amended the specification and respectfully submit that these amendments overcome the Examiner's objections. No new matter has been introduced since these amendments are fully supported by the original specification and claims.

Applicants have canceled the text in claim 9 which the Examiner contends is not shown in the drawing figures and therefore, this objection is now moot.

Claims 1, 3-10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended the claims to provide the proper antecedent basis. In addition, Applicants have amended the independent claims to recite that the endless body has at least two surfaces. This eliminates any confusion over the terms "obverse" and "reverse".

With respect to the Examiner's comments regarding claims 5-8, claim 5 merely recites that the protruding part is set curved inwardly in addition to extending outwardly with respect to the open front of the fitted element (container body 1). As shown in Figs. 7 and 14, for example, the protruding part is directed obliquely and outwards with respect to the open front 9 of the container body 1; while at the same time, a length of the protruding part can be curved inwardly in a direction that the protruding part is squeezed during normal operation. The two limitations can coexist without contradiction since the point of references of each is different. More specifically, the obliquely and outwards extension of the protruding part is relative to an open front of the fitted element (e.g., open front 9 of the container body 1), while the inwardly curved nature along a length of the protruding part is relative to a direction of squeezing the protruding part. As shown in Fig. 14, as the door 11 is closed relative to the body 1, the protruding part is subjected to a squeezing force (not shown), with the protruding part being curved inwardly relative to the direction of squeezing (see arrow in Fig. 13). Applicants respectfully believe the claims, when read in view of

the specification, are sufficiently clear and therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is in order.

However, in order to advance prosecution, Applicants have clarified that the protruding part is formed so as to be curved toward the open front of the fitted element (container body). This is fully supported in the specification (paragraph [0071] of the publication) as well as the drawing figures. Thus, both features share a common reference and therefore, there should be little uncertainty as to the claimed terms.

Applicants believe that the other amendments to the claims address and overcome the other issues raised in the rejection based on 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is in order.

Claims 1-8 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the Shimizu reference (JP Publication No. 57-34141).

Applicants respectfully traverse the current rejection based on the following grounds. As with the other references mentioned in the last Office Action and that were distinguished in Applicants' last Amendment, the Shimizu reference is also a reference that discloses a "two-directional seal" since the seal in this reference does not function in the same manner as the present sealing element, which is a "one-directional" seal. A one-directional seal is one where, as an interior of the sealed portion of a vessel, becomes high in pressure, the inner fluid (gas or air) can easily be released to the outside, while the exterior side of the sealed portion would become high in pressure, resulting in the exterior gas being prevented from entering into the vessel through the sealing element. As an interior of the sealed vessel becomes high in pressure, inner fluid can not be easily released from the inside to the outside.

Applicants therefore reiterate the comments set forth in the last Amendment that the current sealing element is a one-directional seal, while the prior art references disclose two-directional seals. Applicants therefore, respectfully submit that this feature clearly differentiates the claimed invention over the prior art references.

Claims 3-8, and 12 should be allowed as depending from what should now be an allowed independent claim 1.

Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Figs. 1 and 2 of the present application and in view of the Shimizu reference and the Hyobu et al. reference.

Claim 9 has been amended in the same manner that claim 1 has been amended and therefore, claim 9 should be allowed for the same reasons as to why claim 1 should be allowed, namely, that the above noted features are neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, including the secondary Shimizu reference and the secondary Hyobu et al. reference.

Claim 10 should be allowed as depending from what should now be an allowed independent claim 9.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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